

PRESS CONFERENCE WITH MAJORITY LEADER

STENY H. HOYER

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

2:06 p.m.

Mr. Hoyer. Okay. First of all, let me start with -- I think you just saw President Zelensky going into the White House with President Biden.

President Zelensky, in my opinion, stands at the front door of freedom, international order, and a peaceful and abiding world community.

This is a very historic day. Speaker Pelosi pointed out this morning that the last head of state to address the Congress of the United States at a time of war was Winston Churchill in 1941.

The phrase, by the way, that I just gave you, stands at the front door of freedom, international order, and a peaceful and abiding -- and a law-abiding world community, is my own. I just wrote that in the margins here, because I really think that's who he is. And that's why we're doing \$45 billion in this bill, to make sure that we prevail in this fight for freedom and fight for international law.

And Zelensky has shown himself to be an extraordinary, inspirational, courageous leader that is due our respect. But respect without the very, very substantial support that we've given him would be somewhat empty respect. He deserves all the respect. Some of you asked me, Well, how much would we do? And my response has been: As much as we need to do. That's my limit. This is a fight for freedom, fight for the -- a world order of law and justice.

Having said that, we do have a floor schedule.

Obviously, the omnibus is at front and center. I'm hopeful that the Senate can move it by tonight. We will see. The Senate always has difficulty in getting things done because their rules allow very small numbers, up to individual Members, to slow things down. But hopefully they're going to pass it, and hopefully they're going to pass it tonight. And we will meet Friday's deadline, as you know, when the government,

again, will be at risk of shutting down.

The fiscal year 2023 omnibus package, in my opinion, delivers on historic investments, not the least of which is the money to defend freedom. You know, the Kennedy phrase that I -- that rings in my mind all the time when I think of it is that we will pay any price, bear any burden to defend freedom here and around the world.

That inspired the world in terms of our commitment. What we are doing today, I think, is inspiring the rest of the free world that America will, in fact, stand with them in defending freedom.

We got in the bill a number of things that are very important. There are some things that we didn't get, however. We didn't get the permanent continuous coverage for 40 million children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP. Excuse me. We did get these -- increased -- what we didn't get is the permanent tax credit.

We got an increase of \$21 billion for veterans healthcare coverage. We got a billion dollars for emergency support to help victims of hurricanes and wildfires, including \$1 billion for Puerto Rican electric grid. We got critical community project funding to support important projects in our districts, which I think is critically important.

I fought for that for many years, as I think all of you know, openly, transparently. You all knew where I stood on so-called earmarks, community projects. The Constitution says we raise and we spend money. That's what the Constitution says. It didn't say the government bureaucrats. And I'm a big supporter of bureaucrats. I do not use that as an epithet, but they don't know as much of my -- about my district as I do, or any other the 434 of my colleagues or 100 Members of the Senate.

I've talked about the \$45 billion that's included to support Ukraine. And we're also putting on the House floor -- tomorrow, we're putting the rule on Representative Neal's bill to make the President's tax returns available to the public.

And when I say the President, I mean generally, not just Trump's tax returns, which the court has upheld our right to see and the committee has now voted to release.

But it upholds -- the Neal bill says every President ought to do this. Why? Because the President of the United States is the only one who singularly can make extraordinary decisions which will affect his own interests or her own interests. And if the public doesn't know their interests, they can't make that judgment. So I think that's necessary for any President. And, in fact, of course, almost every candidate for President other than Trump, who of course follows none of the norms of good behavior, hasn't done.

In addition, lastly, the January 6th Committee hearing and criminal referrals. I think the January 6th Committee was an extraordinary creation, and it handled itself -- each of the Members and the Committee as a whole handled itself in the best traditions of oversight, with integrity and transparency. I think Mr. Thompson and Ms. Cheney were extraordinary, and all of the Members of the Committee were extraordinary.

Their nonpartisan findings clearly show former President Trump's plan to overturn the 2020 elections and block the peaceful transfer of power. And it is clear to me -- I don't make this decision -- but that it was a violation of the criminal law. I believe treason was perpetrated.

And, of course, the charges that are brought are the issues of obstructing official proceedings. I think they're -- that is beyond any kind of reasonable doubt.

Conspiracy to defraud the United States, I have less knowledge about that, but I think obviously their effort was to defraud the United States of a fair and free election of electing its President.

And the submission of false statements, that is clearly true beyond a reasonable

doubt. But that applies to 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and years since.

And incitement of insurrection, how anyone could believe that inviting a crowd to Washington, D.C., alleging and believing and then leading them to believe that the election was stolen, contrary to every court proceeding, and then deploying them to the Capitol of the United States to "stop the steal" -- i.e., the proceedings of Congress -- and to fight like hell is anything but the incitement of insurrection as a principal and as a conspirator. And then the 187 minutes, was it, that he sat and watched television before he said anything about this shouldn't be happening. I believe that was treason.

Okay. We'll go to -- oh, no. I'm sorry. One point, additional thing I want to say. It's just ironic to say I want to speak more, because one of the things I'm going to lament most is not just losing you at my daily or weekly Pen & Pads, but I'm also going to miss, truly, a magical minute, which I have.

And one of the reasons I love that magical minute, it, in the House, which is difficult to do, allows you to give a coherent statement -- as opposed to a 1-minute or a 5-minute diatribe -- a coherent statement as to why you are for or against a proposition that is on the floor.

I have tried to use that magic minute not only on behalf of myself, but on behalf of my party to give cogent, rational, and thoughtful reasons for or against the propositions that my party has been for or against, or that I have been for or against. And I will lament the loss of that 1 minute.

There are other ways to do that, I understand, but I will no longer have that. I'm really going to miss that. Of the things I'm going to miss -- there are a number of things I'm going to miss -- although I have a conference room. Some of you have been in my conference room over in the Longworth Building. But I will miss that magic 1 minute.

But I intend to give one last 1-minute probably tomorrow, at which I will talk

about my experiences and my advice and why I think we've been successful and why -- and what I think we could do to be more successful in the future, and give some unsolicited advice to those who will assume power on January 3rd, whoever they may be.

Your turn.

Q Leader Hoyer, thank you for doing this. Really sad this is our last one.

Hopefully you can keep talking to us in a different setting next year.

Mr. Hoyer. Well, you know, I still --

Q You'll figure it out.

Mr. Hoyer. I still have a conference room.

Q So why are you pushing to pass the IRS bill tomorrow from the House Ways and Means Committee if it's not going to pass the Senate? Doesn't --

Mr. Hoyer. Because --

Q Because it seems like kind of a wasted vote.

Mr. Hoyer. It ought to pass one House at least. And because the Republicans have pursued coverup for every day since January 6th, there is no expectation that they would offer such a legislation.

So we think -- it's why we passed the Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is not going to be taken up by the Senate. I lament that. But it was the right thing to do, and it was very hard to get done. And I will look back on it as a big accomplishment. I'm very pleased that we passed it because it was the right thing to do. This is the right thing to do.

Now, the fact of the matter is every Democratic President has done this. Most Republican Presidents, candidates, have done it. Only Trump. Trump is the exception to the rule. Not a rule in law but a rule of practice. It's the right thing to do, and they won't do it.

So we have maybe 2 legislative days left to do it. We're going to do it.

Q Did you take a look at the information that the committee put out?

Mr. Hoyer. I have not yet.

Q Just wondering if -- what your take was on it.

Mr. Hoyer. I'm -- they put out an executive summary.

Q Yeah, and some details of his tax returns.

Mr. Hoyer. Yeah, but I haven't looked at it yet. We've been working on trying to get what we're going to do today and tomorrow, so I really haven't had the time. But I'm going to look at it.

Q Thank you, Leader Hoyer.

Mr. Hoyer. Yes?

Q Leader, thank you. I hope you do continue some sort of --

Mr. Hoyer. I want to do that, yes. You know I enjoy this. I think it's a good way for me to communicate my thoughts. And so, if you guys will come, I'll probably be continuing this.

But I don't want to be perceived, however, as the -- as -- I love Nancy's analogy. I don't want to be the mother-in-law in the kitchen telling my daughter-in-law how to cook. That's not appreciated. And I'm a big supporter of Jeffries', a big supporter of Clark's, and a big supporter of Pete's -- Aguilar. So I don't want to be stepping on their lines.

Q As one with a mother-in-law, I can agree on that.

Mr. Hoyer. I gotcha. Okay.

Q Do you think Democrats missed an opportunity to address the debt ceiling in the omni or before losing --

Mr. Hoyer. I think --

Q -- the majority in the House?

Mr. Hoyer. -- Schumer was confronted with a very difficult decision. I think he wanted to do that. We wanted to do it. And the good news, in the House, you can do it. You know, you can -- okay, we're going to do it. The next day, you can do it.

In the Senate, that's not possible unless you have unanimous consent. Clearly, on this, you would not have unanimous consent, because apparently Republicans want to use it as a cudgel. As you know, I think that's extraordinarily irresponsible, because I think the ramifications of playing games with the debt limit -- even if ultimately you approve it, the ramifications leading up to the uncertainty that is created are damaging. And if you did not approve it, they are catastrophic.

Q How do you see it playing out --

Mr. Hoyer. The debt limit?

Q -- next year? Yeah.

Mr. Hoyer. I think we'll have some sort of deal, I hope. McConnell understands, you know, how detrimental that would be. And McConnell has almost always, in the end, tried to be helpful.

I don't know what Mr. McCarthy is doing on the debt limit. I choose to believe that he understands how irresponsible and catastrophic it would be. He's in a difficult position right now, to say the least.

Q You sound like you're enjoying watching that play out.

Mr. Hoyer. No. I would prefer that he weren't in this position. Let me tell you why. I would prefer that the House works. As you know, people call me an institutionalist. We are, today and tomorrow, looking at how badly the House and Senate are broken.

Now, as you know, one of my priorities as majority leader has been passing appropriation bills. They haven't passed any appropriation bills in the Senate. None,

zero, zip. They didn't do so last year. The appropriation is a back-burner issue.

What that does is it creates the chaos that we've seen over the last week. And the consideration of a bill that is overwhelming in its -- what's in the bill -- I mean, anybody that says, I know what's -- I know everything that's in the bill is lying. Everybody that's saying that.

But this -- having said that, it's absolutely necessary to pass this bill. We need to keep government funded. We need to keep it funded in a continuing appropriation bill as opposed to a CR, which, as you know, I think is -- and everybody thinks is very, very damaging to the operations -- not only the Defense Department -- when you talk about national security, it is damaging to every agency and department of government.

Yeah?

Do we have anybody else, I mean, on this --

Staff. I don't see hands raised.

Mr. Hoyer. Okay. Okay.

Q If I could ask a two-part question.

Number one, just want to see if the omnibus -- how confident are you that that's going to actually be able to get done on Thursday and that Members are going to be able to beat the snowstorm to get back to their districts? And the other thing I wanted to ask --

Mr. Hoyer. I think the snowstorm is helping us.

Q Is helping you guys get it done sooner?

Mr. Hoyer. I think people want to get out of town.

Q So you're confident -- you're pretty confident, then, that the House will --

Mr. Hoyer. But we did not plan the snowstorm.

Q -- pass that omnibus bill?

Mr. Hoyer. I don't want to be blamed for the snowstorm.

Q So you're pretty confident, then, that the House is going to pass the omnibus?

Mr. Hoyer. No, I didn't say that. I think there's a reason to get it done soon. We will get it soon, as soon as we get it. The House has that ability. The House works, and we do not allow, except in very small instances, individual Senators, or I would say individual House Members to stop the running of the Senate. They may have an objection. They may not have a suspension. But the majority has, ultimately and quickly, the ability to act in the House.

That's not true in the Senate, which is why we didn't get the debt limit done, because it was going to take too much time.

Q Uh-huh.

Mr. Hoyer. And Schumer just didn't have the time available to him. But I am confident that we're not going to shut down government. And if it takes till Friday, if it takes till Saturday, if it takes till Sunday -- Sunday is Christmas. We're not going to shut down government and send people home with a ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas.

Q If I could also ask, I know caucus tomorrow, members will be voting on the next oversight chair. And Steering and Policy has obviously recommended Congressman Raskin. And I was just wondering -- and forgive me, I'm not quite sure if you're still on Steering and Policy or if you're a part of the vote. I was wondering if, as a fair -- fellow Marylander, you can comment a little bit on Raskin's ability to lead the committee next year, bearing of course on the vote tomorrow?

Mr. Hoyer. I think all of the candidates for that post are very able. And certainly my colleague from Maryland, Jamie Raskin, has shown himself to be very able. I think any of them would lead the committee with a great deal of ability and

effectiveness.

Q Yeah. On the Presidential audit bill, Richard Neal had said last night that he thought it might work well on the suspension list. Was that considered and --

Mr. Hoyer. If we could do that, I think we'd do it. We haven't determined that.

Q Oh, so it could still --

Mr. Hoyer. We're doing it -- we're having a rule, because we -- our assumption is it can't. So we'll do the rule and we'll pass it, hopefully; and we'll get, hopefully, overwhelming support from both sides of the aisle, because both sides of the aisle expect to have Presidents in the future.

Q Well, if you could have done it on the suspension calendar, what would the advantage of that been?

Mr. Hoyer. Well, time. You know, that's -- and right now, time is a very precious commodity. So if we could do it on suspension with 20 hours of debate, no -- rule takes an hour. Then you have to vote on the rule. You have a motion to -- a previous question to vote. So you have a lot of procedural steps.

Now, from the Senate standpoint, we do it lightning fast. But from our standpoint, if you really want to get something done -- we have 18 or 19 suspensions on the floor now, all of which are noncontroversial, passed the Senate overwhelmingly. They're passing our bills. And a lot of them are in the omnibus.

But time is the issue. But we know we'll pass it. We won't lose Democrats on it. And I hope we don't lose any Republicans on it. I would hope the Republicans and Democrats would all vote for it.

Very frankly, I would hope we don't debate it very long; say, Look, this is a good idea. If we do that, we'll save a lot of time. And maybe we can do no previous question except a voice vote and have a voice vote on the bill -- on the rule. I don't

know that that'll happen, but they're -- you know, we'll see.

The Republicans all voted against it in committee.

Q Right. Someone's going to call for a vote.

Mr. Hoyer. Yeah. So -- so we thought a rule is the safest way to get it done without wasting time pretending we're going to do suspension. If everybody votes for it, hooray.

Q Mr. Hoyer, I want to ask you -- you've been in leadership a long time. I think you ruled keenly over a great caucus, vice chair, and, God, these.

Mr. Hoyer. I've been almost everything you can be.

Q Thirty-five years.

Mr. Hoyer. I wasn't -- yeah. Thirty -- yeah.

Q Yeah. Do you think -- I think one of the biggest -- and I've been up here a long time covering leadership. I mean -- and you talked about the appropriations process being broken and that it -- part of the reason is the leadership is too powerful.

And, I mean, you guys passed a \$3 trillion bill in the House, and you didn't have a hearing on it. You didn't have a markup on it. You know, I mean, it was an important bill. It was COVID relief, but you didn't -- you passed a \$3 trillion bill without a markup.

Mr. Hoyer. You know, we passed the CARES bill on a voice vote.

Q Yeah. I mean, so -- but is the leadership too strong? Is that the biggest problem, you think, or have Members changed so much that Congress doesn't work with it?

Mr. Hoyer. I think the leadership has become pivotal in -- let's -- let me speak, first of all, to the appropriation process.

Q Right.

Mr. Hoyer. What has happened is the appropriation process has been perceived

in the Senate as taking too long.

Q The marking up -- passing -- yeah. It's too long to get it on the floor?

Mr. Hoyer. The memos -- too long -- not to get them on the floor, but on the floor.

Q On the floor. Right. And we have every bill --

Mr. Hoyer. Yeah. And so, essentially, the Senate has abandoned the appropriation process and come to believe that the omnibus at the end of the year and this crisis that we confront is regular order. It's not regular order.

What ought to happen, and what happened for a long period of time since 1981, when I was a member -- you know, I went on -- January of 1983, I went on the Appropriations Committee. I was on Bill Natcher's and Ed Roybal's subcommittees, and we passed a bill. The Senate passed a bill. We went to conference, and we sat across the table and, I like this section, I don't like that section. You want this. We want that.

It was a dynamic process in which all the members of the subcommittee on Republican, Democrats, Senate, House participated. That no longer happens, and it makes the leadership very powerful because they're the ones that it finally gets up to the top floor, and they have to make decisions, or we wouldn't get through the process.

And that has -- that has empowered them. And we ought to go back -- and I'm going to go back to the Appropriations Committee, and I'm going to work with Rosa DeLauro as our leader and try to get us back to that place. And I've talked to Mr. Schumer about it. I'm going to talk to him again. I'm going to talk to Kay Granger about it. I've talked to Kay. Kay Granger agrees with me 100 percent, as you would --

Q McCarthy just told us he's not going to do any more omnibuses. If they don't -- if the Senate doesn't pass -- if they're in charge and he's Speaker, if the Senate doesn't pass a bill, they're not going to put in -- if they don't pass an approps bill, they're

not going to put in an omnibus. That's what he told us. Anyway, that's what he said in panel.

Mr. Hoyer. McCarthy is in a very difficult situation --

Q Yeah, he is.

Mr. Hoyer. -- right now, so I will -- I will talk to him after he's elected and see what he --

Q Are you going to be a ranking --

Mr. Hoyer. See what he thinks.

Q Are you going to be a ranking member on a subcommittee?

Mr. Hoyer. Yes.

Q Which subcommittee?

Mr. Hoyer. The Financial Services. Used to be the Treasury Postal.

Q Yeah.

Mr. Hoyer. I am the senior member, as you know, on the committee.

Q Yeah.

Mr. Hoyer. Now, Mr. Rogers is -- came in the same Congress --

Q Came in the same time, yeah.

Mr. Hoyer. -- so he's 5 months my senior. I came in in May in the special election. But, other than that, I'm a senior member. I'm a senior of all the Democrats. I'm not going to run against Rosa for chair. I didn't leave the leadership to create consensus in our party to simply go over and run against Ms. DeLauro, who's doing an excellent job. And I'm going to be supporting her, working with her, and I'm pleased with the job she does for us. But it so happens that Mr. Quigley is leaving to take Mr. Price's position.

Q Right.

Mr. Hoyer. And so there's an opening. I talked to Mr. Pocan. He was enthusiastic about my -- he's the next member, but he understood. Obviously, I'm very senior to Pocan. But, irrespective of that, he was very supportive of my taking that position. So I'm going back into a position as ranking member, which will not adversely affect anybody.

Q That doesn't have anything to do with you want to protect the IRS money?

Mr. Hoyer. I -- of course. But, having said that, I served on the Treasury Postal Committee, which is now the Finance, for 23 years. So it's not like -- and it also deals with the 62,000 Federal employees that I represent. So it's not just FBI, but we'll help FBI and GSA? It may have some effect. We'll see.

Yes?

Q Quick followup on the FSGG subcommittee. Of course, that does have sway over GSA. FBI headquarters going to be a pretty big issue next year. Can you talk us through what your priorities will be? I mean, is it -- can you still try to make a difference on that issue in the next year, make it --

Mr. Hoyer. We want a fair process. That's our whole objective. We want a fair process. We don't want it skewed to Maryland or skewed to Virginia. We want a fair process. We think, under a fair process, we compete, and we can compete successfully, and that's our objective.

Q And do you want to see that kind of provision in next year's bill?

Mr. Hoyer. What I want to see is for us to achieve -- in terms of these discussions that's set up now, achieve a fair process that both Virginia and Maryland conclude -- it may not be what we like, but it's fair. That's our objective.

Yes?

Q I apologize if you addressed this already, but do you have any comment for

Republicans that are planning to skip tonight's Zelensky address?

Mr. Hoyer. Well, there are going to be people who aren't here.

Q Well, skip it in terms of like a protest.

Mr. Hoyer. A protest?

Q Against the funding.

Mr. Hoyer. My -- I hadn't heard that, but my reaction is that's unfortunate.

You weren't here -- now, I'm older than almost every Member, and I remember what I believed to be the most compelling inaugural speech that I've heard. It was given out on the east front. We now do it on the west front, but it was given out on the east front.

And Kennedy said, among extraordinary rhetoric that he and Sorensen, I guess, put together, but we'll pay any price, bear any burden to defend freedom here and around the world, at a time when the Cold War was pretty hot, at a time when the world was worried about nuclear obliteration.

Ronald Reagan said the same thing. He said, Tear down this evil empire.

We now have a proponent of the evil empire assaulting a free country, heading up a country that agreed in 1994 that if you give up your nuclear weapons to us, we will honor your borders. That was a lie.

They stole Crimea. They're now trying to steal the Donbas and eastern Ukraine. Ronald Reagan, if he were here today, George Bush -- George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush, would be saying, We are going to stand with Ukraine and freedom and democracy and rule of law.

Republicans who do not do that do not honor our democracy or their previous Presidents. That's off the top of my head.

Staff. All right. We're on our last question.

Perfect.

Q I thought about this, and I felt like the ghost of Pen & Pads past should get, you know, a few questions.

If Mark Plotkin were alive and well, here for WAMU, he'd ask you about D.C. statehood.

Mr. Hoyer. I'm for that. I've told him.

Q Yes. Many times. If David Rogers or Andy Taylor were here, they would have to ask you about 302(a) and (b) lines and when next year you'd get to them.

Mr. Hoyer. Do you want me to answer any of these questions or they're all rhetorical?

Q I think Julia Halperin would probably ask you about cap-and-trade and why you were moving in it --

Mr. Hoyer. I'm sure she would.

Q -- without the Senate passage.

Mr. Hoyer. Yeah, right. Yeah.

Q And Janet Hook would probably ask something about California.

Mr. Hoyer. Who would?

Q Janet Hook would probably ask something about California.

Mr. Hoyer. All wonderful people. You know, I do enjoy these, and I like all of you, and you've all treated me fairly. Some of you have needled me, and I get that. And that's your job. But I will tell you, I view the press as -- in my entire career -- this is my 53rd year in public office, 12 years in the senate, 42 going on 43 years here. So some period of time.

The press, I've been very blessed. When I was a kid, meaning 27, 28 years of age, a guy named Pete O'Malley and I were the head of the political organization of Prince George's County. We were pretty young hotshots, we all thought. And -- but, from

time to time, the Post would say about the Hoyer-O'Malley machine.

Every time we read that -- it could be in the 50th paragraph, and Judy would say to me -- my wife -- she said, Steny, nobody reads that paragraph other than you and O'Malley. Nobody gets that far, and they don't care.

But we would get, ah, we're not a machine. We're an open, transparent organization, dah dah dah dah dah. But I will say this. I really feel blessed. The press has treated me very, very well. I hope they think I've treated them well.

I like the, as you know, members of the press. I think they have a job to do. It's different than mine. And I think I have found, if -- you know, truthful. Now, sometimes I don't tell you things that I think I shouldn't be telling you, because I don't think they ought to be in print. And that's my job.

But to the extent that we got over that hump and I was a no comment or, you know, I gave you some answer that clearly was not an answer, you know, you -- that was my job, and your job was to ask.

So all of those that you mentioned, they asked great questions. And, boy, the D.C. statehood issue was over and over, and he would be here all the time, and he would make sure he asked that question.

But, you know, my friend, Delgado -- you know Delgado? You've heard him ask me the question about Puerto Rico for the last --

Q Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mr. Hoyer. -- for the last 18 months, and I've been dancing and wheedling around. I am so --

Q That's why he's not here, because you passed the bill.

Q Now it's in the Senate.

Mr. Hoyer. Yeah. Right. And, very frankly, I know that bill won't -- it's done.

Q Right.

Mr. Hoyer. But it was very important for me. I've been for D.C. -- for D.C. I've been for D.C. shorter time, frankly, than I've been for Puerto Rican statehood. But we ought to give those folks the opportunity to choose. We are not an occupying power.

I tell people all over this world, America is the least acquisitive great power that's existed in the history of the world. You think about it. In terms of Japan, we didn't take over Japan. We didn't take over Italy. We didn't take over Germany. In fact, what we did, we invested billions of dollars to build them up as democracies.

We haven't taken over South Korea. We've got a lot of presence there to protect them, but we haven't take -- you know, we're not an acquisitive colonial power, and I'm very proud of that. And that's what Puerto Rico means for me, giving them the right to self-determination.

So I'm very proud of that bill. I know it's not going to become law. I'm going to keep working on it. I'm going to work on it the next session.

The good news, I'm still going to be here. You know, when I read The Washington Post editorial, your story was damn good. And I know you're not supposed to thank reporters for their stories, because then they think they're not being tough enough. But when I read the editorial, Alexis sent it to me that -- the digital -- that night, she sent me the story. I read the story, and I texted her back, isn't it a shame Steny died?

So I want to -- this is not the last time any of us are going to talk. I'm not dying. I'm not going away. I'll still be here, and I still expect, frankly, to hopefully be a relatively influential Member of the Congress of the United States. And I love this job, as you can tell, or I'd go out and I'd make a lot of money. But that's not what I really wanted to do in life. I wanted to be in a job like this, and I love it. And I love dealing with all of you.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 2:40 p.m., the press conference was concluded.]